

Timeline of Supreme Court's McCleary mandate

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On Dec. 6, 2007, a lawsuit was filed in King County Superior Court against Washington state by the Network for Excellence in Washington Schools on behalf of Matthew and Stephanie McCleary and their two children in the Chimacum School District, and Robert and Patty Venema and their two children in Snohomish. The suit alleged that the state was not meeting its constitutional obligation to amply fund a uniform system of education.

The McCleary family's two children, Carter and Kelsey, were 7 and 13 years old and attending Chimacum School District schools in Jefferson County when the lawsuit was filed. As the lead family in the court action, the family name remains affixed to the continuing legal drama.

Robbie and Halie Venema, ages 12 and 15, attended school in Snohomish County at the outset of this legal drama. Their family remains co-petitioners with the McCleary's in the originating lawsuit.

King County Superior Court ruled in favor of the petitioners. The state appealed.

Two laws were then enacted by the legislature in the 2009-2011 biennium, which created a statewide education-funding formula, and also added new programs to the definition of basic education, which the state is obligated to fund under the state Constitution.

The Washington State Supreme Court ruled on the McCleary case in January 2012 and found the state in violation of the Constitution because it was not amply funding basic education.

Then in September 2014, the Supreme Court ruled again, this time holding the state in contempt for failing to submit a plan that would fully implement the measures of basic education that the state legislature outlined in the previous laws it passed to meet the court's and constitution's requirements.

If the legislature does not adopt a plan that fully funds student transportation, materials, supplies, operating costs, all-day kindergarten and class size reduction in K-3 by the adjournment of the 2015 legislative session, the court will reconvene to determine whether it will impose sanctions or remedial measures.